

Message Text

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43

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 EUR-25 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 L-03

SS-20 NSC-07 PRS-01 DRC-01 /106 W

----- 021335

P R 212030Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIOTIRY 7657

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRIDGETOWN 1454

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN EAIR GJ

SUBJ: GRENADA REQUESTS TALKS WITH EASTERN

REF: A) BRIDGETOWN 1279 B) BRIDGETOWN 1385

1. LOCAL COURT LINE REP HARRY MOFFETT DISCLOSED TO EMBOFF
AUG 20 THAT GRENADA PRIME MINISTER ERIC GAIRY HAD ASKED HIM
TO OPEN DISCUSSIONS WITH EASTERN AIRLINES OFFICIALS IN U.S.
IN EFFORT TO HAVE EAL OPERATE SAN JUAN-GRENADA ROUTE (REFTEL B).
GAIRY TOLD MOFFETT HE WAS PREPARED TO ISSUE LETTER OF AUTHORITY
OR TO HAVE GOG REP ACCOMPANY MOFFETT BUT MOFFETT DECLINED
AFTER TELLING GAIRY THAT IT MIGHT BE BETTER FOR HIM TO TALK
TO EAL AS AN INDEPENDENT OBSERVER.

2. ACCORDING TO MOFFETT, HE, GAIRY, AND SOME OF GOG LEADERSHIP
SPENT ALL DAY AUG 18 DISCUSSING QUESTION OF AIR SERVICES TO
GRENADA. GAIRY AND OTHERS EXPRESSED GREAT APPREHENSION RE FUTURE
OF LIAT AND POSSIBLE DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES THAT WOULD ARISE
FOR GRENADA ECONOMY IF SERVICE SHOULD BE INTERRUPTED. MOFFETT
SIAD HE MADE STRONG PITCH TO GAIRY TO STAY OUT OF AIRLINE
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BUSINESS, POINTING OUT ADVANTAGES OF TYING UP WITH EXISTING

INTERNATIONAL CARRIER WITH WIDE MARKETING SETUP SUCH AS EASTERN. GAIRY AGREED BUT SEVERAL OTHERS IN GOG, NOTABLY SENATOR DEREK KNIGHT, EXPRESSED PREFERENCE FOR NATIONAL AIRLINE SCHEME.

3. GAIRY TOLD MOFFETT THAT GOG WAS UNDER GREAT PRESSURE FROM HOTELIERS AND OTHERS TO FIND WAY OF KEEPING OPEN FLOW OF TOURISTS. FURTHER INTERRUPTION OF SERVICES DURING COMING SEASON, HE SAID, WOULD HAVE SERIOUS IMPACT ON GRENADA'S ALREADY- TROUBLED ECONOMY. GAIRY SAID HE HOPED THAT EAL COULD BE CONVINCED TO PICK UP GRENADA-SAN JUAN ROUTE BUT THAT, IF THIS WERE NOT POSSIBLE, GOG WOULD BE FORCED TO TAKE OTHER MEANS OF ENSURING CONTINUATION OF AIR TRANSPORT.

4. ACCORDING TO MOFFETT, EAL HAS ABOUT 18 LOCKHEED ELECTRAS NOW BEING USED ON WASHINGTON-NEWARK SHUTTLE WHICH WOULD BE APPROPRIATE AIRCRAFT FOR THIS TYPE OPERATION IN VIEW OF DIFFICULT ENTRY-EXIT CONDITIONS AT PEARLS AIRPORT. MOFFETT SAID THAT IF EASTERN COMBINED GRENADA ROUTE WITH ONE TO ST THOMAS FROM SAN JUAN, OPERATION WOULD PROBABLY BE FINANCIALLY VIABLE. MOFFETT REMARKED THAT GRENADA WAS AN "EASY ISLAND TO SELL" AND THAT WITH LIAT'S TROUBLES BECOMING GRAVER EACHKDAY, THIS WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT TIME FOR EASTERN TO MOVE MORE SOLIDLY INTO CARIBBEAN. HE ADDED THAT HE COULD THINK OF A FEW OTHER OPTIONS (INVOLVING TRINIDAD, ETC.) THAT COULD MAKE OPERATION MORE ATTRACTIVE. MOFFETT SAYS THAT HE IS PREPARED TO DISCUSS MATTER IN DETAIL WITH EAL IN U.S. "AT ANY TIME."

5. COMMENT: MOFFETT IS CLOSE FRIEND OF GAIRY'S AND DOES HAVE CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE WITH AVIATION IN CARIBBEAN. IT WOULD CERTAINLY APPEAR TO BE IN U.S. INTERESTS TO HAVE EAL OPERATE GRENADA-SAN JUAN ROUTE, IF IT CAN BE MADE ECONOMICALLY VIABLE. REQUEST DEPARTMENT CONSULT WITH EAL (FRED COLLIN, ASST TO VP FOR GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS HAS DISCUSSED MATTER WITH MOFFETT) WITH A VIEW TO ARRANGING MEETING WITH MOFFETT, IF EAL IS SUFFICIENTLY INTERESTED. MOFFETT HAS ALWAYS BEEN COOPERATIVE AND, WE BELIEVE, IS GENUINELY TRYING TO ACT IN BEST INTERESTS OF BOTH GOG AND U.S.

SIMMS

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Message Attributes

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